

FULL COUNCIL – 4TH MARCH 2019

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Report of the Town Clerk – Linda Roberts

SUBJECT: DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

1. Summary

1.1 To inform Members about the protocol and requirements for marking the death of the Sovereign, Members of the Royal Family, Prime Minister or former Prime Minister, a serving MP, the Mayor/Council Leader or other prominent person.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To approve a 'visible' location for the placing of floral tributes in the event of the death of the Sovereign. To approve the War Memorial as the designated location for all other prominent persons including Royal Family members.

2.2 To approve the Committee Room in the Town Hall as the place for people to pay their respects and sign the book of condolence.

2.3 To delegate to the Town Clerk all preparations in relation to such an event so that the Town Council is ready to support the community on the occurrence of such an event and that the Town Council acts with the correct protocol and respect on such an occasion.

2.4 On the announcement of such a death that a Task Force be formed consisting of the Town Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Town Clerk and the Committee Chairs to initiate the protocol and deal with any unforeseen issues as well as communicating regularly to all council Members.

2.5 Following the death of the Sovereign to consider any budget implications necessary for the Coronation of the next Sovereign.

3. Background

3.1 The death of the Sovereign has the operation code name:– London Bridge. The arrangements in the event of the death of the Sovereign have been in place since 1960, reviewed every year and more recently reviewed every three months.

3.2 The National Mourning timetable is as follows: -

- D Day = Date of Death
- D+1 = *Proclamation Day (London)

- D+2 = *Proclamation Day
- D+? = Middle Sunday -Civic Services
- D4-6 to D9 = Lying in State
- D10 = Date of Funeral
- * Sovereign only

3.3 Council Services

It should be business as usual, mixed with grief and respect. We would instigate our agreed protocol. There may be an announcement about a public holiday. Protocol guidance suggests that we should publish a time-table of events, immediately address how our flags should be flown, publicise where books of condolence will be available to the community to sign. To remain visible and on hand to support the community as much as possible.

It is highly likely that on the death of the Queen there will be a huge outpouring of grief and we should be ready to support the Melksham community.

3.4 Town Council's Website

The front page of the website should be changed to include a picture of the deceased. A sympathetic message from the Town Mayor should also be placed on the front page. It is suggested that the page should be black with a photograph of the deceased in the middle, a tab with their year of birth and year of death. Some tabs pointing the public towards, council services, books of condolence, organized church services, floral tributes, flags and any arranged proclamation.

3.5 We should act with careful thought and respect, understanding the mood of the nation. If events and meetings are organised we may need to consider cancelling and or rescheduling them if it is more appropriate to do so. The Town Clerk will liaise closely with the Mayor throughout this time and keep Members fully informed.

3.6 The Union Flag should be flown at half-mast. Half-mast – the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the mast.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The main financial implication will be officer time. There will be some small costs involved with the purchase of black ties, rosettes and armbands.

5. Environmental and Biodiversity Implications

5.1 There are none provided we give a direction that floral tributes are to be laid without plastic or cellophane. It is anticipated that at the appropriate time (usually the day after the funeral), all floral tributes will be gathered and used to create a compost bin. Once compost has been formed to plant a memorial tree with the compost.

6. Crime and Disorder Implications

- 6.1 We will need to be vigilant at all times and liaise with the Police regarding any concerns or issues as diplomatically and efficiently as possible.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 To approve a 'visible' location for the placing of floral tributes in the event of the death of the Sovereign. To approve the War Memorial as the designated location for all other prominent persons including Royal Family Members.
- 7.2 To approve the Committee Room in the Town Hall as the place for people to pay their respects and sign the book of condolence.
- 7.3 To delegate to the Town Clerk all preparations in relation to such an event so that the Town Council is ready to support the community on the occurrence of such an event and that the Town Council acts with the correct protocol and respect on such an occasion.
- 7.4 On the announcement of such a death that a Task Force be formed consisting of the Town Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Town Clerk and the Committee Chairs to initiative the protocol and deal with any unforeseen issues as well as communicating regularly to all council Members.
- 7.5 Following the death of the Sovereign to consider any budget implications necessary for the Coronation of the next Sovereign.

PROTOCOL FOR MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE OR LOCAL HOLDER OF HIGH OFFICE

This protocol sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of:

- HM The Queen
- HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
- HRH The Prince of Wales
- HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
- HRH The Duke of Cambridge
- HRH The Duchess of Cambridge
- HRH Prince George of Cambridge
- HRH Prince Henry (Harry) of Wales
- HRH Duchess of Sussex
- HRH The Duke of York
- HRH The Earl of Essex
- HRH The Princess Royal
- HRH The Countess of Wessex

- The Prime Minister
- The serving Member of Parliament for the Melksham Constituency
- A serving Town Mayor
- A serving member of the Council
- A Former Town Mayor of the Council

This protocol was agreed by Council on 4th March 2019.

It is due for review not later than the end of March 2020.

Action Required	Authorised by	Other Notes
Melksham Town Council's mourning protocol will be implemented on the formal announcement of the death of any one of those persons name on page 1 of this protocol.	Implementation will be authorised by the Town Clerk or in her absence, the Acting Deputy Town Clerk or the Town Clerk's PA.	

Flying the Flag

Action Required	Implemented by	Other Notes
At the request of the Town Clerk, Acting Deputy Clerk or Town Clerk's PA, the flag at the Town Hall will be lowered to half mast.	Town Council Caretaking Team	See Appendix A in this protocol setting out the correct procedure for flying a flag at half mast If the death falls on St George's Day or the period of mourning includes St George's Day, the flag of the patron saint should be replaced by the Union Flag at half mast.
Following the death of the Sovereign, when the new Sovereign is proclaimed (flags will – at 11.00hrs – be raised to full mast and flown throughout the day at full mast, returning to half mast at 1800. In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day following the death will be the Proclamation Day (the day when the new Sovereign is proclaimed). On Proclamation	Town Council Caretaking Team	The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family, the funeral will take place eight

<p>Day flags will, at the start of the day, be flying at half mast. All flags will be flown from the Mast Head from 1100 hours on Proclamation Day (D + 1) to coincide with the Reading of the Principle Proclamation and until 1300 hrs the following day (D + 2). This is because the Proclamation, having been read in London on Proclamation Day, will then be reading Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff on the following Proclamation Day.</p> <p>After the day of Proclamation, all flags are to be lowered to half mast until 0800 hours on the morning following the State Funeral (day of death plus 11 days).</p> <p>For any other prominent figures or local holder of high office, the flag should fly at half mast only on the day of death and the day of the funeral.</p>		<p>days after the day of death.</p>
<p>At Melksham Town Hall, following the death of the Sovereign or other members of the Royal Family identified in the list on page 1, flags will continue to be flown at half mast until 0800hrs on the day following the funeral.</p> <p>For all others identified in the list of page 1, flags at Melksham Town Hall will fly at half mast on the day of the announcement of the death. On subsequent days, the usual local arrangements will resume (see the note opposite) until the day of the funeral when they will again fly at half mast.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family, the number of days will be fewer.</p> <p>The phrase 'Usual local arrangements' should be read as meaning that where a flag is usually flown it can, on the day following the funeral, again be flown at full mast. If no flag is usually flown, the flag can be taken down.</p>

<p>Melksham at the news of the death of The statement will also appear on the home page of the website.</p> <p>The statement will confirm that flags are to be flown at half mast and will give details of the Books of Condolence. In the case of the death of the Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family it will also mention any arrangements for an e-Book of Condolence on the Royal Website.</p> <p>On the death of any other significant person, the Town Clerk will discuss with the Town Mayor whether an e-book of Condolence should be opened on the Council's website.</p>	<p>copy of the statement appears on the home page of the Council's website.</p>	
<p>When the Book of Condolence has been closed, the Town Clerk will arrange for it to be stored in the Town Council archives.</p>	<p>Town Clerk</p>	

Civic Engagements

From the day of death until the day after the funeral, careful thought should be given to the type of events and activities the Town Mayor should host or attend. Lunches, dinners and receptions may not fit in with the mood of the nation and as a mark of respect may need to be cancelled or postponed.

Where school visits are scheduled it might be helpful for the Town Mayor to spend time with the children to talk about the events that are unfolding. This should not be pressed upon a Town Mayor who is not comfortable with taking on such a role.

Action Required	Authorised /Implemented By	Other Notes
<p>To review the programme of engagements undertaken by the Town Mayor to ensure it is appropriate in a time of national mourning and that it sits comfortably with the</p>	<p>The Town Mayor in conjunction with the Town Clerk.</p>	<p>Consider working with local faith groups to arrange some sort of service on the eve of the funeral.</p>

national mood.		
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Dress Code

If a full Council meeting falls during the period of mourning it might be felt appropriate for Councillors to wear a black tie or black arm band.

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
A stock of black ties, mourning rosettes and black armbands will be held in and available from the Mayor's Office for use by the Councillors and Town Clerk and officers of the Council following the death of a senior figure.	The stock to be issued and maintained in good order by the Mayor's Secretary.	At the time of the annual review of this protocol, consideration will be given to the number of items in stock, their condition and the need for cleaning, repair or replacement.
On the death of the Sovereign, the Chains of office will be appropriately worn i.e. with a black velvet jewellery bag encasing the medallions.	Mayor's Secretary	The black jewellery bag will be kept with a supply of black armbands, black ties and rosettes, in a safe place in the Town Hall.

Public Observance of Silence

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
<p>When the death of a senior member of the Royal Family is to be marked by a Silence, an announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace.</p> <p>The Town Mayor will lead a Public Silence at _____.</p> <p>All those listed in Appendix C to be present. Councillors to wear black ties/arm bands/rosettes.</p>	Town Clerk.	

Letter of Condolence from Melksham Town Council

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
As soon as practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the Town Mayor before dispatch.	Town Clerk.	

Appendix A

Full details for on the correct way to fly flags at half mast is given on the website of the Flag Institute (www.flaginstitute.org).

It is important that the guidance given by the Flag Institute is strictly adhered to.

Half-mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole. Flags cannot be flown at half-mast on poles that are more than 45° from the vertical, but a mourning cravat can be used instead.

When a flag is to be flown at half-mast, it should first be raised all the way to the top of the mast, allowed to remain there for a second and then be lowered to the half mast position. When it is being lowered from the half mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.

Appendix B

The statement should begin with a suitable expression of sadness of the Town Council on hearing the announcement.

It might go on to state that flags will be flown at half mast.

If it is an occasion when Books of Condolence will be opened, then reference could be made to that.

When a decision has been taken on the Council's programme of events and engagements, it might be stated that events are being cancelled as a mark of respect, if not, that they will begin with a period of silence.

If in doubt, do not rush out a statement which commits the Town Council to action before that action has been discussed and has the necessary agreement from the political leadership.

Appendix C

All members of the Council

Town Clerk

Past Mayors

Mrs L A Roberts BA(Hons), PGCAP, FHEA, FSLCC
Town Clerk and RFO